

## **Author Visits at Your Library!**

### **A How to from the Michigan Center for the Book**

#### Locating Authors

- Publisher's or author web sites. If a publisher doesn't have a library marketing department, call the publicity department and ask for their latest catalogs which will list current and upcoming authors with planned tour cities.
- Community newspaper listings of book events.
- Bookstores.
- ALA online authors database, *Authors @ Your Library* at <http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/progresources/authors/authorsyour.htm>
- Michigan Center for the Book's *Michigan Authors & Illustrators* database at <http://mel.org/miai/miai.html>
- Points to consider when selecting an author: audience size (a track record of attracting a large audience will give you an advantage in securing a "big name" author), meeting room size (smaller rooms are good for first novelists and mid-list authors).

#### Inviting Authors

- Extend an invitation via written letter or email to the publisher or author (depending on what contact you have). It's a good idea, if contacting a publisher, to provide them with a wish list of authors in case your first choice may not be available.
- Inform the publisher/author what you are able to pay. The author will need to know up-front what your budget will allow. Costs to consider in addition to the speaker fee are travel and accommodations. These costs may be less or waived for a local author or an author on tour. Also, the publisher or author may lower their fee for a public library; you can negotiate. You can find the tour cities of most authors by visiting their publisher's website. Publishers' seasonal catalogs also list tour cities for each author. List of possible funding sources provided.
- Provide your contact information including email address, telephone and fax numbers, library name and complete address.

#### Arrangements

- Allow a minimum of six months lead-time for most author visits.
- After you receive an affirmative reply from the author, have an agreement drawn up. (this can be a contract, provided by the author/publisher or by your library, a *Letter of Confirmation* or, a *Memo of Understanding*.) See examples provided.

- Prepare timeline for facility arrangements (book your meeting room or other venue soon!), publicity and purchases (additional titles or related works to be purchased for library's collection to augment the event?).
- If you intend to offer book sales, arrange with the publisher or a local bookstore (know how you handle retail sales—does your Friends group do it or can the library?). If the library will manage the sales, arrange staff or volunteers to assist at the event. Some bookstores will offer a percentage of sales to the library for the service of providing a venue for book sales. Some publishers will have multiple copies sent to the library before the event and any books not sold are returned to the publisher—make sure you know what will be done and who is responsible for payments, mailing, etc.
- Contact community groups, businesses, or neighboring libraries that may have an interest and see if/how they would be willing to collaborate.
- If your library is responsible for making travel and/or accommodation arrangements, do this early. If your library makes arrangements for accommodations be sure to inquire whether there are special needs (i.e. non-smoking room, first floor room). Make sure that you provide the author or publisher with reservation information and confirmation numbers.

## Funding

- Friends of the Library—your libraries group may be willing/able to help.
- Book sale—use book donation proceeds.
- Library budget—if not already a line item in your library's budget, consider adding money for adult programming.
- Grants—Federal, state and city agencies have a variety of funding opportunities, i.e. Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs at [http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17445\\_19272---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17445_19272---,00.html), Michigan Humanities Council at <http://mihumanities.h-net.msu.edu/> (programs offered include Quick Grants and Arts & Humanities Touring Program Grants). Lead times and requirements vary so review early to determine whether you can or will apply.
- Subscription—your library may choose to plan a program series in which people pay to attend and thereby have the program pay for itself (or raise funds for other projects). Consult with your library's board or attorney to determine whether this is possible.

## Publicity

- Local newspapers (for feature stories or paid ads or inserts).
- Local editions of metropolitan or county newspapers.
- Specialty publications (i.e. parent journals, business weeklies).
- Radio.

- Cable television.
- Online calendars (state-wide, city or business-sponsored).
- Book discussion and writer groups.
- Book stores.
- Movie theater (promos/ads that are run with movie previews).
- Library website.
- Print materials, including: fliers, posters, bookmarks, reading group guides (some publishers will provide), postcards (some publishers will provide), banners, and a newsletter. If the event is funded, most grant awarding organizations require you to include that information on print materials. Be sure you know what the lead time is, if using a printer. Proof-read, proof-read, proof-read written materials!
- Press kits—provided by publishers who can also provide author photos. Ask the publisher if they will send complimentary copies of the all the author's books to your library. Display them at the library.
- Mailings (through postal service or via email).
- Postings at local high schools, senior centers, community & technical colleges, businesses (get permission first). Send brochures & flyers to the chairman of the English Department at local schools & colleges.

## Event Preparation

- Contact author one week before the event to confirm. Make sure you have provided the author with directions to the program location. Provide the author with a contact phone, such as a cell phone, which is answered by a live person that the author can call in the hours before the event if necessary.
- Plan introductory and concluding remarks. Your introduction is a great place to make a pitch for upcoming library programs. Be sure to thank sponsors. Concluding remarks should include a thank you to the author and an invitation to the audience to express their appreciation. If books are available for purchase, invite the audience to view them and state that the author will sign books, too.
- Set out brochures about the program, author, related material displays, and upcoming library events on a table at the back of the room.
- If refreshments are being served, place them in an area that will least disturb the audience. State at the introduction whether refreshments are available at the conclusion of the event or whether the audience may pick up refreshments during the program.
- At the table or podium (you will have prearranged with the author what he/she requires), place a glass of water with a pitcher.
- Determine room configuration.
- Is it necessary to reserve a parking place for author?
- Make sure that any equipment needed is in place and working (slide projector, screen, microphone, computer, network connections).
- If books are to be sold, set up a table and chair(s). Have a pen and change ready, too (if your library is handling the sales; bookstore will

handle this if they are doing sales). Have staff and/or volunteer(s) do sales (if a bookstore is not doing sales). Do not have the author handle the transactions; the author will be talking and signing books.

## Costs

- Speaking fees.
- Travel and accommodations for author (you will determine with author/publisher who is responsible for these).
- Printing (brochures, posters, fliers).
- Photocopying.
- Postage.
- Hospitality supplies.

## Evaluation

- Simple & short or extensive & long—which will yours be?
- Pass out before the audience breaks up and have clear instructions on where and to whom they should return evaluations. Provide writing utensil (pen or pencil).
- Some things to find out: Did you like the program? What did you particularly like or dislike? What other kinds of programs would you like the library to sponsor? Where did you hear about this program? Do you regularly use the library? Have you attended library programs before (how often) or is this the first?
- Do a head count during the program. Most funding organizations will require this information—some will also want some break down of data on audience such as age and gender. At a minimum do a head count for your own information (state aid report or future planning needs).

## Post Event Tasks

- Thank you to the author.
- Follow up to the publisher.
- Thank you to the venue, if it was at a location other than the library.
- Final report to funding organization (if required).

Acknowledgement: to the Dakota County Library (Eagan, Minnesota) for some ideas and information used in this material.

SAMPLE CONTRACT  
(Should be printed on official letterhead)

\_\_\_\_\_ agrees to provide the *LIBRARY NAME*, with  
(name of presenter/performer)  
the following service(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

At \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per presentation, for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

According to our arrangements your presentation(s) will be at:

<u>Library</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Length of Program</u>
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*Name of library or  
Other venue*

Payment for above presentation(s) will be presented on the date of the presentation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*LIBRARY NAME* Representative (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Presenter/Performer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check to be made payable to: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax I.D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presenter/Performer (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign one copy and return in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.

## SAMPLE LETTER OF CONFIRMATION

Name  
Address  
Phone Number

### LETTER OF CONFIRMATION

This letter confirms a performance by AUTHOR NAME at the LIBRARY NAME, and also serves as an agreement between AUTHOR NAME and the LIBRARY. NAME.

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Library Representative (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Author/Performer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign one copy and return it in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.

SAMPLE MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING  
(With shared costs & a variety of arrangements)

**MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING**

Between: LIBRARY NAME and AUTHOR NAME

Re: NAME/TYPE of Program

To be presented: At the LIBRARY NAME in LOCATION on DATE. The program, NUMBER minutes in duration, will begin at TIME. The library will provide the LIST OF ITEMS (i.e. *screen, slide projector, podium, and microphone*). AUTHOR NAME will arrive a minimum of ½ hour before the program commences.

After the presentation there will be a book signing. AUTHOR, PUBLISHER or BOOKSTORE will bring books, to be offered for sale. The Library will provide a table for the book signing and LIBRARY or BOOKSTORE will assist with the book sales. The program and book signing will conclude by TIME.

The LIBRARY NAME agrees to pay AUTHOR a \$AMOUNT speaker fee. In addition to this fee the Library will pay for ARRANGEMENTS (i.e., *one night's stay in a hotel in LOCATION*). The cost of transportation from DESTINATIONS, as arranged by PERSON DOING ARRANGING will be paid by PARTY RESPONSIBLE. Transportation costs, for the Library, are: \$AMOUNT for COST (i.e. *car rental* ) and \$AMOUNT (i.e. *air transportation*). PERSON RESPONSIBLE will be responsible for arranging flights and car rental and will provide receipts for the Library's share of these costs for reimbursement. Transportation costs will not exceed \$AMOUNT. The LIBRARY NAME will reimburse AUTHOR or PUBLISHER within 30 days of receipt. The speaker fee, \$AMOUNT, will be paid at the time of the program. PARTY RESPONSIBLE will reserve and pay for the hotel room. The hotel room will be available to AUTHOR NAME by TIME on DATE.

The Library will do the publicity (locally) for the program. AUTHOR or PUBLISHER will provide media kits to distribute to the press. AUTHOR may also be contacted directly by interested reporter(s).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
AUTHOR (signature)

LIBRARY NAME Representative

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please sign one copy and return in the enclosed envelope. Thank you.